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ABSTRACT

A study of the structure of the speech act known as an apology looked at the differences in linguistic strategies used by advanced nonnative English language learners and native speakers in apology behavior, and whether the differences result from the severity of the offense or the familiarity of the interlocutors. An apology is seen as consisting of five major linguistic strategies: an expression of an apology, an explanation or account of the situation used as an indirect act of apology, an acknowledgment of responsibility, an offer of repair, and/or a promise of forbearance. The 180 subjects included 96 native English-speaking students at 6 United States universities and 84 advanced learners of English at Israeli universities. Two versions of a language use questionnaire designed to elicit apologies in varied situations were administered to the subjects. The responses were categorized by strategies used in the apologies elicited and combination or modification of strategies. The findings indicate that nonnatives lack sensitivity to certain distinctions that natives make between forms for expressing apology and between intensifiers, with the nonnative tendency being to overgeneralize or use a variety of forms. It was also found that nonnatives tend to avoid interjections and curses, and do not consistently produce comments providing the appropriate social lubricant in difficult situations. Whether or not it is worthwhile to teach learners these distinctions is still under consideration. (MSE)

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ADVANCED EFL APOLOGIES: WHAT REMAINS TO BE LEARNED?*

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INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years, teachers have been encouraged to give attention to speech strategies that are expected, and perhaps even essential, in given situations — such as the appropriate strategies for apologizing, complaining, requesting. The empirical study of speech acts has been undertaken to gather information on what appropriate use of linguistic forms in different sociocultural contexts actually comprises. A number of studies have shown that nonnative speakers may fail to communicate effectively in a given situation even though their command of grammar and vocabulary is fine (Sullivan 1979, Rintell 1981, Wolfson 1981, Freundlich 1981, House 1982, Blum-Kulka 1982, Blum-Kulka, Danet, & Gerson ms, Thomas 1983, Rubin 1983, Eisenstein & Bodman 1984). As the studies begin to multiply, a picture is emerging as to the basic structure of speech act sets — i.e., the major linguistic and pragmatic strategies which alone or in combination would represent the particular speech act in a given situation. For example, in one apology situation, "sorry" may serve quite adequately as a full-fledged apology. In another situation, it may be necessary to say something like "I am really very sorry" in order to obtain the desired effect.

1.1. APOLOGY SPEECH ACT SET. Empirical studies concerning the nature of apologies in a variety of languages and cultures have been conducted (e.g., Cohen & Olshtain 1981, Olshtain 1983, Olshtain & Cohen 1983, Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, Olshtain & Cohen ms), and as a result, there is considerable information on the basic strategies for apologizing. The following is a description of the apology speech act set according to its development in Olshtain & Cohen 1983 (based on Fraser 1980):

a. an expression of an apology, whereby the speaker uses a word, expression, or sentence which contains a relevant performative verb such as: "apologize," "forgive," "excuse," "be sorry." While all languages can be expected to have a number of such performative verbs, some of these verbs will have a more conventionalized use than others. An expression of an apology can be intensified whenever the apologizer feels the need to do so. Such intensification is usually brought about by adding suitable intensifiers (e.g., "I'm really sorry," "I'm really very sorry"). The type of intensification chosen by a speaker is language- and situation-specific.

b. an explanation or account of the situation which indirectly caused the apologizer to commit the offense and which is used by the speaker as an indirect speech act of apologizing. The criteria for choosing the particular utterance are therefore semantic rather than formal. Given the context of the offense, the statement is intended to "set things right." In some cultures this may be a more acceptable way of apologizing than in others. Thus, in an environment where people have great difficulty with transportation, coming late to a meeting and giving an explanation like, "The bus was late," might be perfectly acceptable. In other cultures, however, where transportation is expected to be good and on a regular schedule, it is the person who is considered late and not the bus, and therefore perhaps the excuse is less acceptable as an apology.

c. acknowledgment of responsibility, whereby the offender recognizes his/her fault in causing the infraction. The degree of such recognition on the part of the apologizer can be placed on a scale. The highest level of intensity is an acceptance of the blame: "It's my fault." At a somewhat lower level would be or an expression of self-deficiency: "I was confused/I didn't see/You are right." At a still lower level would be the expression of

lack of intent: "I didn't mean to." Lower still would be an implicit expression of responsibility: "I was sure I had given you the right directions." Finally, the apologizer may not accept the blame at all, in which case there may be a denial of responsibility: "It wasn't my fault," or even blaming of the hearer: "It's your own fault."

d. an offer of repair, whereby the apologizer makes a bid to carry out an action or provide payment for some kind of damage which resulted from his/her infraction. This strategy is situation-specific and is only appropriate when actual damage has occurred.

e. a promise of forbearance, whereby the apologizer commits him/herself to not having the offense happen again, a strategy which is again situation-specific and less frequent than the others.

The five major strategies which make up the apology speech act set are available to speakers across languages, yet the preference for any one of these or for a combination of them will depend on the specific situation within the given language and culture group.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS. Empirical studies of apology have been conducted for the most part with intermediate learners, under the assumption that advanced nonnatives would already have mastery over even the more complex speech act sets such as apologizing, and hence there would not be much to learn from assessing this group's ability. However, it has become increasingly clear to researchers that even advanced speakers of a language may lack mastery of some of the more complex speech acts. The present line of investigation sought to determine the nature and extent of gaps between native and advanced nonnative apologies.

The research questions being asked in this study are as follows:

(1) What difference do we find between advanced nonnative learners and native speakers in their apology behavior

- a. in the five main strategies?
- b. as regards modifications of the main strategies?

The five strategies are those enumerated above — i.e., apology, explanation, responsibility, repair, and promise of forbearance. Modifications on these refer to the intensity of the apology, minimizing or denying responsibility, emotionals, minimizing the offense, and comments.

(2) Are there differences in apology behavior resulting from

- a. the severity of the offense?
- b. the familiarity of the interlocutors?

2.0. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1. SUBJECTS. The 180 respondents for this study included 96 native English-speaking college students, studying at one of six U.S. universities, and 84 advanced learners of English, who were native Hebrew-speakers studying at one of five Israeli universities. The average age of the English speakers was 28. Fifty-one percent were studying in English teaching programs, 25% in English language and literature programs, and 24% in other programs. The average age of the Hebrew speakers was 24. Twelve percent were studying English teaching, 77% English language and literature, and 11% in other programs. They had studied English from fourth or fifth grade, and had taken at least a year or more of English at the university level. Twenty-one percent rated themselves as "good" speakers of English, 73% as "fair," and 6% as "poor." The majority (52%) reported living from one month to a year in an English speaking community, 16% reported spending more time in an English speaking community (2-10 years), while 32% had no such experience at all.

Fifteen percent reported using English frequently with native speakers, 52% occasionally, and 33% rarely. Whereas their use of the language in speaking was limited, it is reasonable to assume that they had frequent receptive contact with the language through movies and television.

2.2. INSTRUMENTATION. Two versions of a language use questionnaire were designed so as to elicit apologies in a series of situations for which the degree of offense and the familiarity of the interlocutors were varied. Six other speech act situations (involving "compliments," "complaints," and "regrets") were included so as to avoid a response set (i.e., whereby the respondents answer mechanically, using the same forms for all the situations). Each version of the questionnaire included eight apology situations. Either the severity of the offense or the familiarity of the interlocutors was varied by situation between the two versions of the questionnaire. In two cases, the situation was also altered somewhat. A description of the situations according to severity of offense and familiarity between interlocutors is provided in Table 1.

The respondents were asked to put themselves in each situation and to assume that in each case they would, in fact, say something. They were asked to write down in English what they would say. Before commencing with the situations, they were asked to provide background information, which, in the case of the Hebrew speakers, included language proficiency and use. The Appendix contains a sample questionnaire, with versions A and B combined to facilitate comparison.

2.3. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES. The questionnaires were distributed in November 1983, and the last were returned from overseas by March 1984. The questionnaires were filled out in class, for the most part. Forty-four

English speakers and 45 Hebrew speakers filled out version A, while 52 English speakers and 39 Hebrew speakers filled out version B.

2.4. DATA ANALYSIS. Each apology situation was analyzed according to thirteen variables:

- (1) Five apology strategies:
 - a. apology - "sorry," "excuse," "forgive," "apologize," "pardon," + combinations and repetitions.
 - b. explanation - non-specific (e.g., "There've been a lot of things distracting me at work lately") and specific (e.g., "My boss called me to an urgent meeting").
 - c. responsibility - implicit ("I was sure I gave you the directions correctly"), lack of intent ("I didn't mean to"), self-deficiency ("How could I be so clumsy?"), self-blame ("It's my fault").
 - d. repair - unspecified ("Can I help you?"), specified ("Let me pick up these books for you").
 - e. promise of forbearance (e.g., "I promise it won't happen again").
- (2) Combination of/absence of Apology Strategies:
 - a. combination of strategies
 - b. no apology strategy
- (3) Modifications of Apology Strategies:
 - a. intensity of apology - "really," "very," "so," "terribly," "awfully," "truly," "please" + combinations and repetitions.
 - b. minimizing responsibility (e.g., "Didn't I tell you I don't know the bus stops so well?").
 - c. denial of responsibility - denial of fault ("It's not my fault"), blaming hearer ("It's your fault!").
 - d. emotionals - interjection ("Oh," "Oops!"), invocation ("god!" "Jesus!") or curse ("shit!") + combinations.
 - e. minimizing offense (e.g., "It's O.K. No harm done.").
 - f. comments - about self ("How could I?"), about others ("Are you O.K.?"), about situation ("I don't see any damage, thank goodness!") + combinations.

The data were coded by two research assistants. Interrater reliability was calculated on 10% of the questionnaires and the reliability was 90%. One of the investigators then recoded all the questionnaires, focusing primarily on the areas of disagreement between the two raters.

Since many of the variables were nominal in nature and had values that were not incremental (e.g., types of intensification, such as "awfully,

"terribly," "truly," etc.), the data were analyzed using crosstabulations and the chi-square statistic.

FINDINGS

3. APOLOGY BEHAVIOR OF NATIVES VS. ADVANCED NONNATIVES. First, the findings for the five main strategies for apologizing will be considered, then those for the various modifications on these main strategies, and then the effect of specific situations on the apology behavior.

3.1. MAIN STRATEGIES. The findings showed that there were not many differences between the natives and the nonnatives with regard to the main strategies for apologizing, which would be expected given the nonnatives' advanced level of English (see Tables 2-5). Let us consider the similarities and differences, strategy by strategy.

3.1.1. EXPRESSION OF APOLOGY. For the most part, the advanced nonnatives used this strategy in much the same way as the natives did. There was only one case of significant difference in the presence or absence of the strategy — the case of forgetting to buy medicine for a neighbor's sick child. Two-thirds of the nonnative speakers used this strategy while only one-third of the natives did (Table 5). The natives seemed more likely than the nonnatives to use an emotional and an offer of repair in place of the formal expression of apology. There was also a significant difference in the selection of the linguistic form for expressing the apology in the two situations involving bumping into someone and knocking over that person's books in the library. A quarter of the natives on version A and 17% on version B used "excuse me," while few if any nonnatives did (Table 4). It would seem that the nonnatives were limiting themselves to the use of "sorry" in contexts where "excuse me" would also be acceptable and possibly preferable.

3.12. EXPLANATION. There were six situations that elicited the strategy of explanation or excuse. In three of them, nonnatives provided an explanation or excuse with significantly greater frequency — in assigning the wrong sex to a baby of an acquaintance and of a stranger (Table 2), and in forgetting to buy medicine for a neighbor's child (Table 5). In two other situations — forgetting to bring some class notes to the friend of a classmate (Table 3) and forgetting to buy a newspaper for a neighbor (Table 5) — nonnatives also provided explanations with greater frequency, but not significantly so.

3.13. RESPONSIBILITY. Natives and nonnatives responded similarly with regard to this strategy except in two situations. In one situation, spilling coffee on a friend, nonnatives used this strategy significantly more than natives (Table 5). In another situation, the car accident without damage, nonnatives preferred some linguistic form indicating self-blame such as "it was my fault," while natives preferred to indicate lack of intent (e.g., "I didn't mean to") or self-deficiency (e.g., "I didn't see you") (Table 4).

3.14. REPAIR. As with the other main strategies, natives and advanced nonnatives offered repair to a similar extent — 70% or more of both groups in forgetting to bring notes (Table 3), causing both a stranger and a friend to drop books in the library (Table 4), and spilling coffee on a stranger and on a friend, with about 35% in forgetting a newspaper (Table 5). In two cases, there were differences in frequency of use. In forgetting the medicine and spilling coffee on a stranger, the natives repaired more (Table 5). In two cases, there were differences in the linguistic forms used to represent the strategy. In the auto accident with damage to the other car (Table 4) and in forgetting to help a friend buy a bike (Table 3), the nonnatives specified their repair more than the natives did. For example, in the auto accident situation, whereas natives were as likely to say "I'll take care of it" as

they were to be more specific, nonnatives tended to offer the other person their phone number and the name of their insurance company.

3.15. PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS. This strategy appeared in only six of the situations in this study, and its use was limited just to several respondents. The situations included both instances of faulty bus directions, the bike and the class notes situations, causing a stranger's books to be dropped in the library, and forgetting the newspaper.

3.2. COMBINATION OR ABSENCE OF STRATEGIES.

3.21. COMBINATION OF STRATEGIES. In only one situation were the combinations of strategies significantly different for the natives and the nonnatives. This was in the case of forgetting the medicine for the neighbor's child. Most of the natives who combined strategies used "responsibility" and "repair," while few nonnatives used this combination. Nonnatives employed a variety of combinations (Table 5).

3.22. NO APOLOGY. The two groups behaved similarly regarding whether they saw the need to apologize at all. In the two situations involving bus directions, a quarter of both groups, on the average, did not use any apology strategy in their responses (Table 3). In four other situations — the two situations with the baby (Table 2) and the two with the car accident (Table 4) — about 10% or so of each group did not apologize.

3.3. MODIFICATIONS OF MAIN STRATEGIES. While natives and nonnatives were not seen to differ markedly in the use of main strategies for apologizing, striking differences emerged in what are being referred to as the various modifications of such apologies. This seemed to be the area that actually distinguished natives from nonnatives. These phenomena included the intensity of the apology, minimizing or denying responsibility, the use of emotionals,

minimizing the offense, and commenting. Each will be looked at in turn.

3.31. INTENSITY OF APOLOGY. The nonnatives were found to intensify their expression of apology significantly more in one situation — that of forgetting to help a friend buy a bike (Table 3) — and there was a marked trend in that direction in five other situations (taking a stranger's chair at the beach (Table 2), the two situations about bus directions (Table 3), and the two about causing books to be dropped at the library (Table 4)). This extra intensity on the part of the nonnatives was not necessarily warranted, given the generally low or moderate severity of the offense in those situations.

Not only did the nonnatives tend to intensify more, but they also used a variety of forms (e.g., "terribly," "awfully," "truly") more frequently than did the natives. This finding suggested that the nonnatives were less discriminating as to which form of intensification would be appropriate in the given situation. As a case in point, the nonnatives did not use "really" in the way that natives did. They attributed to the intensifier "very" the same semantic properties as to "really," while the natives tended to make a distinction — i.e., such that "really" expressed a greater depth of apology and concern. For example, in the situation of scalding a friend with coffee, natives tended to use "really sorry" while nonnatives used "very sorry" (Table 5). There was a trend in this direction in three other situations — the two situations regarding bus directions (Table 3) and knocking over a friend's books in the library (Table 4). There was also a situation (forgetting to help a friend buy a bike) where no natives used "very" while nonnatives divided evenly between "very" and "really" (Table 3). In another situation (the auto accident without damage) two-thirds of the natives used "really" and one-third used "very," while only 6% of the nonnatives used "really," a

third used "very," and the rest used other forms ("terribly," "so," "truly," "please") (Table 4).

3.32. MINIMIZING OR DENYING RESPONSIBILITY. In the situations selected for this study, it was found that respondents rarely minimized or denied responsibility. The two similar situations that did draw such responses dealt with the faulty bus directions. In the case where the acquaintance missed half of the movie because of the faulty directions, the nonnatives minimized their responsibility significantly more than the natives (e.g., "Didn't I tell you I don't know the stops so well?"). For these same situations, several respondents — especially from among the nonnatives — denied fault or even blamed the hearer ("It's your own fault for trusting my directions") (Table 3).

3.33. EMOTIONALS. In all but one situation, the natives used emotionals more frequently than did the nonnatives, this difference being statistically significant in six situations (taking a friend's chair, the baby incident with a stranger, forgetting about the bike, causing a stranger's library books to be dropped, forgetting to buy medicine, forgetting to buy a newspaper). Usually this meant mostly the use of an interjection, like "Oh!" but occasionally it meant both an interjection and a curse — especially in the bike, medicine, and newspaper situations.

3.34. MINIMIZING THE OFFENSE. This modification strategy did not appear in six situations and appeared only minimally in eight others. The two situations where it was noticeable were that of the bus directions where the acquaintance still saw the show (Table 3) and the car accident without damage (Table 4), the latter being the most conspicuous case. Here 44% of the nonnatives and 41% of the natives minimized the offense, pointing out that no damage was done so there was no need to be upset. In this case the situation

clearly leant itself to this modification strategy.

3.35. COMMENTS. In most situations the commenting behavior of natives and nonnatives was similar, both with respect to amount and nature. In two instances, however, there were significant differences. In the coffee incident where a stranger was scalded, natives commented far more than the nonnatives (61% vs. 27%), and also focused most of their comments on the other person (Table 5). Forty-five percent of the natives included "Are you all right/O.K.?" in their comment. Again, among the nonnatives there was only one such comment. In the car accident without damage, the same percent of respondents commented in both groups (45%) but the natives once again tended to comment about the other person, or about the other person and the situation, rather than just about the situation, as the nonnatives did (Table 4). A quarter of the natives included "Are you all right/O.K.?" in their comment. Only one of the nonnatives did so.

3.4. EFFECTS OF SITUATION. In order to determine the extent to which the severity of the offense and the familiarity of the interlocutors influenced native and nonnative apologies, the mean frequencies of responses for those answering version A of the questionnaire were compared with those who answered version B. Because the data were from different subsamples responding to different versions of the same instrument, chi-square could not be calculated and the findings are based instead on simple analysis of difference in percentages (20% or more constituting a difference). These comparisons are meant to be suggestive, rather than definitive, given the nature of the comparisons.

3.41. SEVERITY OF OFFENSE. In the two cases of the bus directions, when the acquaintance missed half of the movie, both natives and nonnatives intensified their expression of apology more than when none of the movie was

missed. In the two cases of the auto accident, when there was damage, both natives and nonnatives offered an expression of apology and repair less, and used more emotionals. Finally, forgetting medicine for a neighbor's child elicited more repair from natives than did forgetting to buy the neighbor a newspaper.

3.42. FAMILIARITY. Familiarity of interlocutors seemed to have its main influence on the modification strategy of intensifying the expression of apology. In three situations, the native speakers intensified their apology more to the stranger than to the friend — i.e., causing books to be dropped in the library, scalding the person's arm with coffee, and forgetting to bring class notes to a stranger vs. forgetting to help a friend buy a bike.

DISCUSSION

4. It was expected that advanced learners of English as a foreign language would have good control over much of the apology speech act set. What was not clear was where the gaps would be found, if there were any. This study has demonstrated that there are gaps, but that these gaps lie more in the area of modifications of the main strategies, rather than in the main strategies themselves.

In previous research with Hebrew speakers who were intermediate-level learners of English (Cohen & Olshtain 1981), it was found that the nonnatives occasionally underutilized the main strategies of expressing an apology, acknowledging responsibility, and offering repair when compared with natives. In the current research with advanced learners this was not found to be the case. Most likely the types of problems that had led to the deviations with the intermediate learners — namely, negative transfer from Hebrew-speaker patterns due to a lack of sociocultural awareness and a lack of grammatical

competence — were no longer prevalent among the more advanced learners.

The fact that a fair number of natives selected "excuse me" while the nonnatives stuck to "I'm sorry" as the form for expressing apology in knocking over someone's books in the library, suggests that the nonnatives were still overgeneralizing the use of "sorry" — most likely considering it a safe strategy. It would appear that they had not acquired the distinction whereby "excuse me" functions more as a formula for remedying a breach of etiquette or other minor offense on the part of the speakers, while "I'm sorry" is more an expression of regret at an unpleasantness suffered by the addressee (Borkin & Reinhart 1978).

With respect to modifications of the main strategies, intermediate learners of English had been found to intensify their expression of apology less than natives in certain situations (as in bumping into an old lady, hurting her) (Cohen & Olshtain 1981). In the current work with advanced learners, the patterns of intensity were, if anything, overlearned and appeared to be used indiscriminately. The pattern of sticking to one overgeneralized form, such as "very," could be seen as a means of playing it safe. It is possible that the overgeneralized use of "very" on the part of nonnatives also reflects a preference by textbook writers for "very" as opposed to "really" in the English as a foreign language textbooks that these Israeli students had used.

It would seem that the nonnatives used intensity in place of interjections and offer of repair. The question would be whether such use was purposive or accidental. In the case of the native speakers, a well-placed interjection or curse and offer of repair sometimes took the place of an expression of apology with an intensifier ("Oh, shit! Here, let me help you pick them up" vs. "I'm very sorry that I bumped into you"). It could also be seen that natives had a sense of the appropriate comment to use in a given situation as a social

lubricant to reinforce the apology (e.g., "Are you O.K.?" after possibly hurting someone).

There is clearly more work needed in investigating apology behavior in situations where the severity of the offense is quite high. It has already been demonstrated that apology behavior may be lessened or even curtailed once the offense reaches a certain level. The case in point was role play about a borrowed dress being returned dirty, torn, or not returned at all because it was lost. If the dress was lost, there was a tendency to apologize less (Olshtain & Cohen 1983:26-27). This tendency to apologize less under circumstances of greater severity was not so apparent in the current study, although there was a sharp decline from expressing apology in the car accident with no damage as opposed to expressing apology when there was damage. The fact that natives intensified their apology more to strangers than to friends while nonnatives did not, may demonstrate the natives' finely-tuned ability to vary the intensity according to the situation. It may also be an indication of different cultural perceptions of friendship, and the degree of intensity may reflect this perception.

Future research could probe further into the relationship between severity of offense and familiarity of interlocutors. Although this research study kept one of the two variables constant while the other was varied, the one kept constant still had its influence on the outcomes. So, for example, the auto accident with damage and without damage took place with a stranger. It may be beneficial to compare these data to those where in both cases the other driver is a friend.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to obtain a detailed description of how apologies are realized by natives and nonnatives of English. The intent was to describe the nature and extent of gaps between native and

advanced nonnative apologies. It was thought that on the basis of this description curriculum materials could be designed for rectifying the problem of gaps. The current study has shown that there is not that much to be taught to advanced learners. The basic finding was that nonnatives lack sensitivity to certain distinctions that natives make between forms for expressing apology such as "excuse me" and "sorry," and between intensifiers such as "very" and "really." The nonnative pattern is either to overgeneralize one of the forms ("very" and "sorry") or to use a variety of forms. Nonnatives also tend to avoid interjections and curses, and cannot necessarily be counted on to produce comments providing the appropriate social lubricant in difficult situations (e.g., "Are you O.K.?"). The question we are now considering is whether it pays to explain some of these fine points to advanced learners and to see which learners stand to benefit such overt instruction and in what ways they may benefit.

Table 1

Description of Apology Situations by Severity and Familiarity

VERSION A		VERSION B		Severity of Offense		Familiarity	
Item	Situation	Item	Situation				
1	Chairs	1	Chairs	Low	Low	Stranger	Friend
3	Baby	3	Baby	Low	Low	Acquaintance	Stranger
5	Bus to movie	5	Bus to movie	Low	Hi	Acquaintance	Acquaint.
6	Buying bike	7	Class notes	Moderate	Mod.	Friend	Stranger
8	Library	9	Library	Low	Low	Friend	Stranger
10	Car accident	10	Car accident	Moderate	High	Stranger	Stranger
12	Medicine	12	Newspaper	High	Low	Friend	Friend
14	Coffee	14	Coffee	High	High	Stranger	Friend

Apology Behavior of Natives (E1) vs. Advanced Nonnatives (H1) (data in percentages)

	APOLOGY		INTENSITY		EXPLANATION		RESPONSIBILITY		MINIMIZING RESPONSIBILITY		DENYING RESP.		REPAIR		PROMISE OF FORFEITURE		STRATEGY COMBINATIONS		NO APOLOGY		EMOTIONALS		MINIMIZING OFFENSE		COMMENTS	
	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1
CHAIR:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form A	11	7	100	82	93	93	18	22	93	87	100	93	91	91	100	100	25	20	98	98	68	80	100	100	74	94
Lo Offense	sorry		really		explicit		implicit		yes		no fault		specified				apol+resp		yes		interjection				about self	
Stranger	84	89	0	2	7	7	7	2	7	13	0	2	9	9			59	65	2	2	32	20			2	2
	excuse		so				self-				blame						apol+expl+resp							about other		
	5	2	0	2			deficiency				hearer						7	2							9	2
	combination		terribly				75	76			0	5					apol+resp+repair							about situation		
	0	2	0	9													7	7							12	2
			combination														other									
			0	5													2	6								
CHAIR:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form B	15	20	98	97	92	87	44	36	94	92	98	92	86	80	100	100	42	28	90	87	54	79	100	97	83	85
Lo Offense	sorry		so		explicit		implicit		yes		no fault		unspecified				apol+resp		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Friend	83	77	2	0	8	13	6	10	6	8	2	5	4	0			39	39	10	13	46	18	0	3	4	0
	excuse		combination				self-				blame						apol+repair				curse				about other	
	0	3	0	3			deficiency				hearer		specified				2	10			0	3			0	3
	combination						50	54			0	3	10	20			apol+expl+resp				**			about situation		
	2	0															2	10							13	10
																	apol+resp+repair								combination	
																	10	10							0	2
																	other									
																	6	3								
BABY:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form A	57	58	100	100	68	47	84	80	100	96	100	100	68	49	100	100	66	40	86	93	48	62	96	96	66	71
Lo Offense	sorry				implicit		implicit		yes				unspecified				apol+expl		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Acquaint.	36	36			11	2	0	5	0	4			2	7			12	18	14	7	45	38	4	4	2	0
	excuse				explicit		lack intent						2	7			apol+repair				interj+curse				about other	
	7	4			21	51	2	4					specified				7	15			7	0			21	22
	pardon				**		self-deficiency						30	44			expl+repair								about situation	
	0	2					9	11									2	9							9	2
							self-blame										resp+repair								combination	
							5	0									0	7							2	5
																	apol+expl+resp									
																	2	9								
																	other									
																	11	2								
BABY:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form B	48	54	100	92	69	51	83	92	96	92	100	100	40	46	100	100	42	44	90	90	31	62	98	95	59	51
Lo Offense	sorry		really		implicit		implicit		yes				unspecified				apol+expl		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Stranger	46	44	0	3	0	8	2	0	4	8			2	3			9	15	10	10	67	38			10	3
	excuse		so		explicit		self-						specified				apol+repair				interj+curse				about other	
	4	0	0	5	31	41	15	8					58	51			25	20			2	0			29	38
	pardon				*												expl+repair				**				about situation	
	2	2															6	8							2	5
																	apol+expl+resp								combination	
																	6	2							0	3
																	other									
																	12	11								

Chi-square

* p<.05

** p<.01

Chi-square * p < .05

** p < .01

Table 3

	APOLOGY		INTENSITY		EXPLANATION		RESPONSIBILITY		MINIMIZING RESPONSIBILITY		DENYING RESP.		REPAIR		PROMISE OF FORBEARANCE		STRATEGY COMBINATIONS		NO APOLOGY		EMOTIONALS		MINIMIZING OFFENSE		COMMENTS	
	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1
BUS:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form A	39	31	98	75	96	91	53	23	77	82	98	91	98	96	100	98	66	51	77	76	64	78	93	87	48	51
Lo Offense	sorry		really		implicit		implicit		yes		deny blame		unspeci-		yes		apol+expl		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Acquaint.	59	65	2	7	4	7	27	16	23	18	0	9	2	4	0	2	2	7	23	24	36	20	7	13	7	5
	forgive		very		explicit		lack intent				blame						apol+resp				interj+curse				about other	
	0	4	0	7	4	2	2	9			hearer						25	36			0	2			5	9
	apologize		so				self-deficiency				2	0					apol+repair								about situation	
	2	0	0	7			18	22									5	0							36	33
			terribly														other								combination	
			0	2													2	6							4	2
			awfully																							
			0	2																						
BUS:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form B	33	28	69	51	96	90	54	49	96	74	90	87	92	95	100	95	56	44	73	79	50	77	96	95	46	72
Hi Offense	sorry		really		implicit		implicit		yes		deny fault		unspeci-		yes		apol+expl		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Acquaint.	63	62	21	13	0	2	31	33	4	26	8	8	2	3	0	5	4	5	27	21	40	20	4	5	10	5
	forgive		very		explicit		lack intent		*	*	blame		2	3			apol+resp				curse				about other	
	0	3	0	13	4	8	0	5			hearer		specified				31	44			6	3			6	5
	apologize		so				self-deficiency				2	5	10	20			other				interj+curse				about situation	
	2	5	6	9			15	8					combination				9	7			4	0			32	18
	combination		terribly				other						0	2											combination	
	2	2	2	8			0	5																	6	0
			please																							
			0	2																						
			combination																							
			2	2																						
BIKE:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form A	25	22	79	45	77	69	20	20	100	98	100	100	59	58	95	91	16	13	100	100	50	56	100	100	77	71
Mod Offense	sorry		really		implicit		implicit		yes				unspeci-		yes		apol+expl				interjection				about self	
Friend	64	67	14	13	5	7	5	7	0	2			fied		5	9	9	4			25	42			7	16
	forgive		very		explicit		self-deficiency						14	0			apol+resp				curse				about situation	
	3	5	0	9	18	24	75	70					specified				32	29			2	2			14	11
	apologize		so				self-blame						27	40			apol+expl+resp				interj+curse				combination	
	0	3	5	13			0	3					combination				0	7			23	0			2	2
	pardon		terribly				self-blame						0	2			apol+resp+repair				**					
	0	2	2	9			5	0					*				21	16								
	combinations		awfully														apol+expl+resp+repair									
	5	4	0	2													2	7								
			please														other									
			0	2													13	13								
			combination																							
			0	7																						
NOTES:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form B	9	23	56	46	84	74	27	26	96	97	98	97	29	31	92	90	10	15	98	92	33	51	100	100	85	87
Mod Offense	sorry		really		implicit		implicit		yes		deny fault		unspeci-		yes		apol+resp		yes		interjection				about self	
Stranger	85	69	12	5	8	8	6	0	4	3	2	3	fied		8	10	15	10	2	8	54	38			11	10
	excuse		very		explicit		self-						10	15			apol+repair				curse				about other	
	2	0	6	10	8	18	deficiency						specified				15	13			2	0			29	38
	forgive		so				67	74					58	51			apol+resp+repair				interj+curse				about situation	
	0	5	19	27									combination				38	31			9	8			4	3
	apologize		terribly										2	0			apol+expl+resp+repair									
	4	3	6	2													8	10								
			awfully														other									
			2	2													14	21								
			truly																							
			0	3																						
			please																							
			22	3																						

Chi-square

Apology Behavior of Natives (N1) vs. Advanced Nonnatives (N2) (data in percentages)

	APOLOGY		INTENSITY		EXPLANATION		RESPONSE-ABILITY		MINIMIZING RESPONSIBILITY		DENYING RESP.		REPAIR		PROMISE OF FUTURE		STRATEGY COMBINATIONS		NO APOLOGY		EMOTIONALS		MINIMIZING OFFENSE		COMMENTS	
	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1
LIBRARY:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form A	11	29	93	80	100	96	91	78	100	98	100	100	32	27	100	100	36	36	98	98	70	69	100	100	66	66
Lo Offense	sorry		really		implicit		lack intent		yes				unspeci-				apol+resp		yes		interjection				about self	
Friend	61	67	5	2	0	2	0	4	0	2			9	24			5	9	2	2	25	31			9	16
	excuse		very		explicit		self-deficiency						specified				apol+repair				interj+curse			about other		
	25	4	0	2	0	2	9	16					59	49			55	42			5	0			21	13
	combination		so				self-blame										apol+resp+repair						about situation			
	3	0	0	9			0	2									4	5						4	11	
	*		terribly														other									
			0	7													0	8								
			awfully																							
			2	0																						
LIBRARY:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form B	2	8	63	49	96	97	88	82	100	100	100	100	17	18	100	97	13	28	100	100	50	77	100	97	73	85
Lo Offense	sorry		really		explicit		implicit						unspeci-		yes		apol+resp				interjection		yes		about self	
Stranger	70	82	8	8	4	3	2	3					40	26			4	0			46	23	0	3	2	0
	excuse		very				lack intent						specified				apol+repair				interj+curse			about other		
	17	0	4	18			4	5					39	54			73	54			4	0			17	13
	forgive		so				self-deficiency						combination				apol+resp+repair			*			about situation			
	0	2	15	15			6	10					4	2			4	15					6	2		
	combination		terribly														other						combination			
	11	8	8	5													6	3					2	0		
	**		awfully																							
			0	3																						
			combination																							
			2	2																						
CAR:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form A	25	29	59	65	86	93	70	69	93	100	100	100	75	75	100	100	57	56	91	91	91	96	59	56	55	55
Mod Offense	sorry		really		explicit		lack intent		yes				unspeci-				apol+expl		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Stranger	73	60	25	2	14	7	7	0	7	0			16	18			5	2	9	9	7	2	41	49	2	16
	excuse		very				self-deficiency						specified				apol+resp				curse			about other		
	2	2	9	11			16	7					9	7			18	16			2	2			27	2
	apologize		so				self-blame										apol+expl+resp						about situation			
	0	4	5	5			7	24									7	2					9	27		
	combination		terribly				*										apol+resp+repair						combination			
	0	5	2	13													4	9					7	0		
	5	4	0	2													other									
			0	2													0	4								
			*																							
CAR:	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Form B	48	44	63	69	92	84	89	69	100	95	98	97	36	20	100	100	46	41	86	92	69	79	100	95	50	46
Hi Offense	sorry		really		implicit		implicit		yes		deny fault		unspeci-				apol+expl		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
Stranger	52	54	17	3	2	8	2	5	0	2	2	3	33	18			0	5	14	8	21	18	0	5	12	8
	apologize		very		explicit		self-						specified				apol+repair				curse			about other		
	0	2	10	8	6	8	10	10					31	39			23	15			6	3			17	15
			so				self-blame						combination				resp+repair				interj+curse			about situation		
			4	13			19	16					0	3			11	5			4	8			17	23
			terribly										*				apol+expl+repair						combination			
			2	3													4	8						4	8	
			please														apol+resp+repair									
			2	2													12	20								
			combination														other									
			2	2													4	6								
Chi-square																										
* p<.05																										
** p<.01																										

Chi-square
* p < .05
** p < .01

Table 5

Apology Behavior of Natives (E1) vs. Advanced Non-natives (H1) (data in percentages)

	APOLOGY		INTENSITY		EXPLANATION		RESPONSIBILITY		MINIMIZING RESPONSIBILITY		DENYING RESP.		REPAIR		PROMISE OF PERFORMANCE		STRATEGY COMBINATIONS		NO APOLOGY		EMOTIONALS		MINIMIZING OFFENSE		COMMENTS	
	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1	E1	H1
MEDICINE:																										
Form A	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Hi Offense	66	29	89	80	98	71	21	24	100	100	100	100	18	44	100	100	20	20	98	98	29	53	100	100	87	91
Friend	sorry		really		implicit		implicit						unspeci-				apol+resp		yes		interjection				about self	
	34	67	2	4	0	7	2	5					fied				5	20	2	2	50	45			0	5
	excuse		so		explicit		lack intent						9	5			apol+repair				interj+curse				about other	
	0	2	5	9	2	22	2	0					specified				9	4			21	2			9	2
	apologize		terribly		***		self-deficiency						73	11			resp+repair				***				about situation	
	0	2	2	7			75	71					*				43	5							2	2
	***		combination														apol+expl+repair								combination	
			2	0													0	9							2	0
																	apol+resp+repair									
																	21	25								
																	apol+expl+resp+repair									
																	0	9								
																	other									
																	2	8								

NEWSPAPER:																										
Form B	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Lo Offense	37	46	84	90	90	74	17	20	100	100	98	100	65	59	98	100	19	31	96	97	29	54	100	97	92	90
Friend	sorry		really		implicit		self-deficiency				deny fault		unspeci-		yes		apol+resp		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
	63	51	4	3	4	16	83	80			2	0	0	5	2	0	38	18	4	3	56	44	0	3	8	0
	forgive		very		explicit								specified				apol+repair				interj+curse				about other	
	0	3	2	3	6	10							35	36			6	0			6	2			0	5
			so														resp+repair				*				about situation	
			8	0													19	13							0	3
			terribly														apol+expl+resp								combination	
			2	2													2	15							0	2
			please														apol+resp+repair									
			0	2													10	18								
																	other									
																	6	5								
COFFEE:																										
Form A	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Hi Offense	11	12	41	51	100	98	96	78	100	100	100	100	18	33	100	100	25	18	100	98	41	62	100	100	39	73
Stranger	sorry		really		implicit		implicit						unspeci-				apol+resp		yes		interjection				about self	
	72	78	9	4	0	2	0	2					fied				2	18	0	2	48	36			5	9
	excuse		very				lack intent						9	31			apol+repair				interj+curse				about other	
	5	0	5	6			2	9					specified				71	56			11	2			50	9
	forgive		so				self-deficiency						71	27			other								about situation	
	2	2	32	18			2	11					***				2	8							2	9
	pardon		terribly																						combination	
	0	2	11	11																					4	0
	combination		awfully																						***	
	10	6	0	4																						
			truly																							
			0	4																						
			other																							
			2	2																						
COFFEE:																										
Form B	none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none		none	
Hi Offense	23	18	63	56	98	97	94	74	100	97	98	100	34	28	100	100	38	28	92	92	25	69	98	97	5	69
Friend	sorry		really		implicit		lack intent		yes		deny fault		unspeci-				apol+resp		yes		interjection		yes		about self	
	77	72	10	0	0	3	0	8	0	3	2	0	fied				6	8	8	8	65	26	2	3	15	8
	excuse		very		explicit		self-deficiency						29	20			apol+repair				curse				about other	
	0	3	2	8	2	0	4	18					specified				32	44			2	0			25	10
	combination		so				self-blame						35	49			apol+resp+repair				interj+curse				about situation	
	0	7	23	15			2	0					2	3			2	18			8	5			18	10
			terribly				*										other				***				combination	
			2	13													2	2							0	7
			truly																							
			0	3																						

Chi-square

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Appendix

LANGUAGE USE QUESTIONNAIRE - Versions A & B Combined

Background Information

Field of Study and Level _____

Age _____ Mother Tongue _____

If nonnative English speaker, rate your speaking ability:

excellent _____ good _____ fair _____ poor _____.

Time spent in English-speaking community: _____ months, _____ years.

Previous use of English with native speakers:

frequent _____ occasional _____ rare _____.

Current use of English with native speakers:

frequent _____ occasional _____ rare _____.

Instructions: Please put yourself in the following situations and assume that in each instance you will, in fact, say something. Write down what you would say (in English) in the space provided. Make sure that you read the whole situation carefully before you respond.

1. At a crowded pool, you see two empty chairs and quickly start to carry them away. A stranger/friend calls out:

"Hey! Those are our chairs. Didn't you see our clothes on the ground next to them?"

You:

2. You give a report in class. After the lesson, a student whom you don't know very well comes up to you.

Student: "I really enjoyed your report. It was very interesting."

You:

3. Walking along the street, you meet a female acquaintance (whom you haven't seen for some time)/notice a stranger holding a cute little 9-month old baby.

You: "What a cutie! How old is he?"

The acquaintance/The stranger: "It's a she, not a he!"

You:

4. A good friend sees you at the University.

Friend: "I really like your shirt!"

You:

5. An acquaintance you had given bus directions to the day before, sees you on the street.

The acquaintance: "You know, you told me to get off one stop too soon for the movie yesterday. But it was O.K. We still got there before the movie started."/The acquaintance: "You know, you gave me the wrong bus number for the movie theater yesterday! By the time we got there, we had already missed half the movie."

You:

6. (Version A) You promised to meet a friend at a bicycle store to help him/her choose the right bike. You forgot the meeting. The next day, you see your friend.

Friend: "Remember, we were supposed to meet at the bicycle store I waited for you at the store for an hour. I didn't want to buy the bike without you."

You:

7. (Version B) A friend of a classmate called and asked to borrow some class notes of yours. You agreed to meet her that afternoon at the library, but then forgot. That night, she calls.

Her: "Hello, this is Ruth. Remember, I called you yesterday and we agreed to meet at the library today. I waited for you for an hour."

You:

7(A)/6(B). You're eating at your friend's apartment. You think the food is terrible.

Your friend: "How do you like this dish? It's a new recipe."

You:

8(A)/9(B). At the library, you accidentally bump into a friend/an older person about 60 who is holding a stack of books. Your friend/The person is startled, but unhurt. A few of the books fall on the floor.

You:

9(A)/8(B). You're waiting in line at a bank. Someone goes right up to the teller without waiting in line and hands him/her a check to be cashed.

You:

10. You don't stop in time at a red light and bump into the car in front of you. The other driver and you get out and see that there is no damage/considerable damage to the other car. The other driver is still noticeably upset/very upset.

You:

11. You take a good friend to "the best pizza place in town" on a busy evening. When the pizza finally comes, it's cold. You call the waiter back.

You:

12. You promised you'd buy your neighbor medicine for her sick child/a newspaper while in town, but you forgot.

Your neighbor: "Did you get the medicine/paper?"

You:

13. At a party, you meet a friend you haven't seen for some time. You ask about his wife and children.

The friend: "You may not know this, but we just got divorced."

You:

14. In a cafeteria, you accidentally bump into an older person about 60/a friend who is holding a cup of hot coffee. The coffee spills all over the person/your friend, scalding his/her arm and soaking his/her clothing.

The person/The friend (shouting, startled): "Oooh! Ouch!"

You: